

# From the Food Bank Kitchen

## From Mindless to Mindful:

### How Mindful Eating Can Improve Relationship with Food

Take a moment and think about the last meal you ate. Do you remember how it tasted, or how it smells? Do you remember how you felt emotionally when you were eating? If you answered no to any of these questions, do not feel bad. People have so many distractions in today's society, that it can be hard to focus on what we are doing in the moment. The lack of being in the moment can cause people to do something called mindless eating. Mindless eating means that people are not living in the moment with the foods they are eating. A classic example of mindless eating is someone snacking with a large bag of chips while sitting on the couch and watching television. When a person is watching television, they are not focusing on what they are eating, which can cause over eating and weight gain! When eating at a rapid pace, the digestive system cannot communicate to the brain that it is full. Research says it takes at least twenty minutes for the stomach to recognize it is full. This is a long time considering it can take minutes to eat a whole meal. Practicing mindful eating is a great way to become more aware with what your body is telling you. Mindful eating is when a person avoids all distractions and uses all five senses (taste, smell, touch, sight, and hearing) to eat their food. Research suggests that practicing mindful eating can help a person control their weight and even help with weight loss. Not only that, but the experience from eating mindfully is an enjoyment in itself! Below is an activity that anyone can try to become more mindful when eating!

**Source:** [health.harvard.edu](http://health.harvard.edu)

#### Mindful Eating Exercise Using an Orange

You can use any fruit or food for this exercise. Before you start this exercise, get rid of any distractions and focus all of your awareness on the experience.

1. Hold the orange in your hand and examine it. Look at the orange as if you have never seen an orange before. Look at the color of the orange, feel the texture of the orange. Notice how the skin of the orange is filled with tiny little "pinpricks" and how the orange skin feels against your fingertips.
2. Put the orange up to your nose and smell the aroma of the orange. Put the orange up to your ear and shake it to hear if it makes a sound. Keeping the orange to your ear, gently squeeze the orange with your hand and notice if you hear any sound from the inside of the orange.
3. As you begin to peel the orange notice the sound it makes as you peel it, notice the aroma of the orange growing stronger as it is peeled. If the juice of the orange drips, feel it with your fingertips -- does it feel warm or cold, is the texture sticky or watery?
4. Once you have the orange peeled, look closely at the orange. See the difference in the color of the inside of the orange in contrast to the skin of the orange. Examine the white fibrous veins of the orange. Notice the divot in the orange where the stem was once attached.
5. As you break open the orange notice the sound it makes as you break it apart into sections. Take one section of the orange and look at it closely. Examine the contrast of the fibrous outer portion of the orange to the smoothness of the inner wedge portion.
6. Watch the spray of juice as you break the section of the orange open. Notice the individual little pulps within the orange section brimming with juice.
7. Slowly bring the orange to your mouth, notice how your mouth begins to water in anticipation and how your hand leads your arm to your mouth. Gently place the orange in your mouth, letting it lie on your tongue first without taking a bite, exploring the feel of the orange in your mouth.
8. Now bite down on the orange and notice the taste of the orange. Slowly begin to chew the orange and notice which side of the mouth it goes to while you chew. Feel how the texture and consistency of the orange changes as you chew it.
9. When you are ready to swallow the orange be conscious of the act of swallowing, try to feel the sensations of swallowing the orange as it moves down your throat and into your stomach.

What did you notice about the orange with your senses during this exercise? Were you surprised? Did any memories come to mind during this exercise? Eating is a wonderful exercise for mindfulness. Take your time and enjoy eating as an experience, giving all of your attention to the process of eating and really tasting it without the distraction of eating while doing other things such as watching television, driving, reading, etc.

Try this exercise a few times during the next week and see if you notice more enjoyment in eating.

**Source:** [mindfulness Exercises.com](http://mindfulness Exercises.com)

## Tips on How to Become More Mindful:

- Eat slowly.** It takes awhile for the brain and stomach to communicate that a person is full. Try chewing 25 times during each bite, and drink some water too. This can help prevent overeating.
- Know your hunger signals.** Sometimes people eat due to emotional and stressful situations (even boredom too!). When a person starts to feel hungry, they should also see how they are feeling emotionally to see if they are actually hungry.
- Lessen the distractions.** A person should try eating meals without the television on or their cell phones. This can cause mindless eating, because a person is distracted by an electronic device. Try eating in quieter places too in order to get more enjoyment from food.
- Consider where food comes from.** A good way to start mindful eating is considering what is on a person's plate. Think about where the foods originally came from. For example, if a person is eating broccoli, think about how that broccoli was grown and the time and effort that was needed by farmers to grow it.
- **Eat healthier foods instead of junk foods.** Mindful eating is thinking about what food does for our bodies. Eating lots of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, low fat dairy, and lean meats are foods that we need in order to be healthy. When planning on mindful eating, eat these types of food. Not only will you be getting the proper nutrients, but you will be creating better relationships with the foods that make you healthy.

## Healthy Broccoli Salad

Serves 8

Source: [rachelcooks.com](http://rachelcooks.com)

### Ingredients

- 6 heaping cups coarsely chopped fresh broccoli – about 3 crowns or one large head
- \*¼ cup diced red onion (about 1/2 large red onion)
- ½ cup crumbled or chopped cooked bacon
- 1 cup plain Greek yogurt
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- ¼ teaspoon celery seed
- 1 cup raisins
- 3 tablespoons honey
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper

### Directions:

In a large mixing bowl, combine broccoli, onion, bacon, and raisins. In a small bowl or measuring cup, whisk together dressing ingredients: yogurt, honey, vinegar, pepper, salt, and celery seed. Taste and add salt and pepper to season as you like. Pour dressing over broccoli and stir to combine until all broccoli is coated with dressing. For best flavor, refrigerate for at least one hour and stir again before serving.

\***Note:** If you soak the chopped onions in ice water for about 30 minutes before adding them to the salad, it takes the bite out of them and makes their flavor less strong.

**Nutrition:** 1 Serving= 1 Cup: Calories 169, Fat 4g, Saturated Fat 1g, Sodium 273mg, Carbs 39mg, Fiber 5g, Sugar 18g, Protein 9g.

## Chipotle Lime Cauliflower Tacos

Serves 4

Source: [eatingwell.com](http://eatingwell.com)

### Ingredients

- ¼ C lime juice (about 2 limes)
- 1-2 Tbsp. chopped chipotles in adobo sauce
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 small head cauliflower, cut into bite sized pieces
- 8 corn tortillas, warmed
- 1 Tbsp. honey
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 small red onion, halved, and thinly sliced
- 1 (15 oz.) can black beans, warmed
- ½ C feta cheese (optional)

### Directions:

Preheat oven to 450°F. Line a large rimmed baking sheet with foil. Combine lime juice, chipotles to taste, honey, garlic and salt in a small bowl and mix until mostly smooth. Place cauliflower in a large bowl, add the sauce and stir to coat. Transfer to the prepared baking sheet. Sprinkle onion on top. Roast, stirring once, until the cauliflower is tender and browned in spots, 18 to 20 minutes. Serve the vegetables and beans in tortillas, topped with cheese.

**Nutrition:** 2 tacos: Calories 288, Fat 7g, Saturated Fat 2g, Carbs 48g, Fiber 11g, Sugar 4g, Protein 12g.

## Watermelon-Lime Blueberry Salad

Serves 4

Source: [simplymindful.com](http://simplymindful.com)

### Ingredients

- 1 seedless watermelon (2-3lbs)
- ¼ C basil, chopped
- 1 pint blueberries
- 1-2 limes, juices

**Directions:** Wash all produce, and chop watermelon into halves and then into quarters. Remove rind and cut quarters into cubes and place in a large mixing bowl. Add the fresh blueberries and basil and douse with fresh lime juice. It's best to chill before serving. Enjoy!

**Nutrition:** 1 serving=1 Cup: Calories 148, Fat 0.5g, Saturated Fat 0g, Carbs 38g, Fiber 13g, Sugar 29g, Sodium 5mg, Protein 11g.

*If you try any of these recipes and have any comments or suggestions, please contact the Nutrition Coordinators. Either email Amber ([amberl@foodbankwma.org](mailto:amberl@foodbankwma.org)) or Mariah ([mariahm@foodbankwma.org](mailto:mariahm@foodbankwma.org)) and tell us what you think of the recipes!*